

From: Richie Laager
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 12/9/01 8:26pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

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To whom it may concern:

I feel that the proposed settlement in the Microsoft Anti-trust case is fatally flawed. It places commercial entities on a "more level" playing field than not-for-profit entities. As a full-time user of Linux (www.kernel.org) (www.linux.com) (www.linux.org), I see (on a daily basis) Microsoft's growing monopoly. By allowing this proposed settlement, you would be serving to strengthen Microsoft's monopoly.

I suggest that Microsoft be forced to donate large sums of money to the Free Software Foundation (www.fsf.org), the Electronic Frontier Foundation (www.eff.org), the Apache Software Foundation (www.apache.org), the Samba project (www.samba.org), and finally, the WINE project (www.winehq.com). I have selected these for the following reasons:

- - FSF: They promote Free Software, which is being crushed by Microsoft's monopoly.

- - EFF: They are an industry watchdog for the rights of users, which Microsoft has blatantly violated.

- - Apache: They create a competing webserver to Microsoft's IIS. Because of Microsoft's monopoly, IIS has been forced on many companies, and it's long history of security vulnerabilities has cost the world billions of dollars. Apache is much more secure than IIS, and is being developed by an *open* community.

- - Samba: The Samba project aims to create an open implementation of Microsoft's file and printer sharing technology. This technology was created by a group of companies, but now, Microsoft has squeezed them out of the development of this protocol. Once the Samba project had implemented the core features of the SMB protocol used by Windows, Microsoft changed the way the protocol worked. (This was done in Windows 2000 and up.) Such changes have the disadvantage of reducing interoperability. This even applies to those users that run Windows only.

- -WINE: The WINE project is attempting to reproduce the Windows API for Unix. This will allow users the flexibility to run Windows applications on non-Windows operating systems, without the need to pay Microsoft. The WINE project faces the same situation as the Samba project, except on a much greater scale.

Also, Microsoft is undoubtedly planning to use its monopoly in the operating system market (e.g. the Windows product line), the browser market (e.g. Internet Explorer), and the Internet portal (e.g. MSN, Hotmail, Expedia, and MANY MANY MORE websites) to push its .NET technology. The .NET technology will be terrible for consumers, as it will place the confidential, personal data of millions of people in the hands of Microsoft. ONE small security leak in just ONE application of just ONE company would place all this data at the risk of being stolen and misused. Besides, many of the concepts of the .NET system have been stolen from other companies. For example, Microsoft recently created a new computer programming language called C# (pronounced C-sharp). A simple search on the Internet will reveal many websites that explain in great detail how similar it is to the Java language invented by Sun Microsystems (www.sun.com). (So much for Microsoft's "innovation.")

Also, to further detail the Free Software situation, I offer the following: When Microsoft decided to create a more secure networking stack for Windows 2000, they looked no further than FreeBSD (www.freebsd.com). They simply integrated code developed by individuals in their spare time into a product and sold it. (This was allowed by the license of FreeBSD, of course.) Of course, Microsoft promoted Windows 2000's more secure TCP/IP stack. It was yet another one of their so-called "innovations."

To close, I'd just like to point out that I am a 15 year-old high school student. In my spare time, I am employed as a professional Java programmer. If I can go into such a detailed explanation of the flaws of the proposed Microsoft settlement, why hasn't the Department of Justice figured this out already? Does it have something to do with the fact that you're too busy prosecuting a certain Russian for a piece of software he developed to allow a certain U.S. companies software to comply with Russian law?

Where have our rights gone in the digital age? I was taught that the United States was "the land of the free, and the home of the brave." It seems to me the United States is the land where freedom is paid for, and bravery is simply a word in a

large book known to some as "the dictionary."

Our freedom has been reduced to the level of an animal's. At least I can rest assured that "all animals are created equal." Oh wait, I almost forgot "some animals are more equal than others." Don't reinforce this timeless quote on political oppression by allowing the proposed settlement with Microsoft.

Thank you for your time,
Richard Laager

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